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NEWS

For Immediate Release:

USDA Provides Up to \$1 Million in New Conservation Partnership Initiative Grants

Durham, August 13, 2004—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman has announced that up to \$1 million is available in fiscal year 2004 Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) grants.

The CPI fosters conservation partnerships and funds projects that focus technical and financial resources on conservation priorities in watersheds of special significance and other geographic areas of environmental sensitivity. CPI grants are available to state and local governments, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations that have a history of working with agricultural producers.

“This program assists farmers in achieving critical conservation goals and the protection of natural resources,” said Veneman. “These grants encourage partnerships to devise and implement watershed or regional solutions to pressing natural resource priorities associated with agriculture and rural settings.”

CPI is carried out through two phases. First, applicants must submit proposals for project planning funds to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) state office. Applicants may request between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in funding through CPI for project planning phase and must provide a one-to-one match using non-NRCS funding. Up to 100 percent of the match may come from in-kind contributions.

Applications must address at least one of the four CPI conservation priorities for 2004: terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat improvement, coastal resources conservation, livestock nutrient management, and minor/specialty crop pest management.

In addition, CPI projects must be consistent with the following four CPI objectives. Projects must encourage:

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add one –

- Producers to cooperate in the installation and maintenance of conservation practices that affect multiple agricultural operations,
- Producers to share information and technical and financial resources,
- Cumulative conservation benefits in geographic areas, and
- Development and demonstration of innovative conservation methods.

The NRCS has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) that can be found on the agency's website at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cpi/index.html> and the Federal eGrants website at <http://www.grants.gov>. Funds will be awarded through a nationwide competition.

Selected applicants will have up to 18 months to develop the partnership, generate producer interest and participation, and prepare a final project plan. Following completion and approval of the final project plan, phase two project implementation begins. Applicants are expected to secure project implementation funds from a wide range of potential partners including local, state, and Federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

Grant applications must be received in the NRCS State Office by September 10, 2004. Send grant applications to State Conservationist, USDA-NRCS, 2 Madbury Road, Durham, NH 03824. For more information about CPI grants, the application process, or the RFP, visit

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cpi>

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